AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 50 and 51 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend Claims 1 through 3, 5 through 8, 10 through 18, 20, 23, 25, 26, and 46 through 49 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a generating ~~means for generating~~ unit that generates transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

an operation ~~means for causing~~ unit that causes a user to select a desired transfer information from the generated transfer information;

a reception ~~means for receiving~~ unit that receives image data from ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the selected transfer information on the basis of the selected transfer information; and

a transmission ~~means for transmitting~~ unit that transmits the received image data to ~~an output~~ a second device represented by the selected transfer information on the basis of the selected transfer information.

2. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein said reception ~~means~~ unit transmits the selected transfer information to the ~~input~~ first device in order to control the ~~input~~ first device, and said transmission ~~means~~ unit transmits the selected transfer information to the ~~output~~ second device in order to control the ~~output~~ second device.

3. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising an announcement ~~means for announcing~~ unit that announces, to a network, device information containing information representing that said reception ~~means~~ unit controls the ~~input~~ first device as an active device and information representing that said transmission ~~means~~ unit controls the ~~output~~ second device as an active device.

4. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein the transfer information contains a protocol used to transfer the data, a data format of the data to be transferred, and an address representing a destination to which the data is to be transferred.

5. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a generating ~~means for generating~~ unit that generates transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

an operation ~~means for causing~~ unit that causes a user to select a desired transfer path corresponding to the generated transfer information;

an acquisition ~~means for acquiring~~ unit that acquires transfer information corresponding to the selected transfer path;

an input ~~means for inputting~~ unit that inputs image data at ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the acquired transfer information; and

a transmission ~~means for transmitting~~ unit that transmits the input image data from the ~~input~~ first device to ~~an external~~ a second device represented by the acquired transfer information on the basis of the acquired transfer information.

6. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 5, wherein said transmission ~~means~~ unit transmits the input image data to a proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, and said proxy device transfers the received image data to an output device represented by the acquired transfer information in accordance with a request from the output device.

7. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 5, wherein said transmission ~~means~~ unit transmits the input image data to a proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, and said proxy device transfers the received image data by controlling an output device represented by the acquired transfer information in accordance with the acquired transfer information.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 5, wherein said transmission ~~means~~ unit transmits the acquired transfer information to the ~~external~~ second device.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 5, wherein the transfer information contains a protocol used to transfer the data, a data format of the data to be transferred, and an address representing a destination to which the data is to be transferred.

10. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a generating ~~means for generating~~ unit that generates transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the plurality of devices including a proxy device which converts a data format of image data ~~into a data format~~, a first device which can transmit image data of which the data format can be converted by the proxy device, and a second device which can process image data of which the data format is converted;

an acquisition ~~means for acquiring~~ unit that acquires the transfer information;

a reception ~~means for~~ unit that, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, ~~receiving~~ receives the image data from ~~an external~~ the first device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network;

a conversion ~~means for~~ unit that, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, ~~converting~~ converts a data format of the received image data ~~into a data format represented by the acquired transfer information~~; and

a transmission ~~means for transmitting~~ unit that transmits the converted image data from the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information to ~~a transfer destination~~ the second device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network.

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 10, further comprising an announcement ~~means for announcing~~ unit that announces, to the network, information representing a data format receivable by said reception ~~means~~ unit and information representing a data format transmittable by said transmission ~~means~~ unit.

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 10, wherein said conversion ~~means~~ unit performs at least one of conversion of the data format, conversion of an image resolution, and conversion of an image depth.

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 10, wherein said conversion ~~means~~ unit performs at least one of image trimming, image enlargement, image reduction, image deformation, image edge extraction, and image color conversion.

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 10, wherein said conversion ~~means~~ unit performs at least one of conversion of the image data to coded data by encoding processing such as character recognition, conversion of the image data to a structured image format by image region separation processing and encoding processing, and conversion of coded data to the image data by rasterization image processing.

15. (Currently Amended) The ~~device~~ system according to claim 10, wherein said conversion ~~means~~ unit performs conversion of a data compression scheme or conversion of a data compression ratio.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~An image input/output control~~ A method for ~~executing image input/output processing~~ transmitting image data, said method comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

causing a user to select a desired transfer information from the generated transfer information; and

transmitting image data from ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the selected transfer information to ~~an output~~ a second device represented by the selected transfer information on the basis of the selected transfer information.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein

in said ~~receiving~~ transmitting step, the selected transfer information is transmitted to the ~~input~~ first device in order to control the ~~input~~ first device, and

in said transmitting step, the selected transfer information is transmitted to the ~~output~~ second device in order to control the ~~output~~ second device.

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, further comprising an announcing step of announcing, to a network, device information containing information representing that, in said ~~receiving~~ transmitting step, the ~~input~~ first device is controlled as an active device and information representing that, in said transmitting step, the ~~output~~ second device is controlled as an active device.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 16, wherein the transfer information contains a protocol used to transfer the data, a data format of the data to be transferred, and an address representing a destination to which the data is to be transferred.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~An image input/output control~~ A method for ~~executing image input/output processing~~ transmitting image data, said method comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

causing a user to select a desired transfer path;

acquiring transfer information corresponding to the selected transfer path;

inputting image data at ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the acquired transfer information; and

transmitting the input image data from the ~~input~~ first device to ~~an external~~ a second device represented by the acquired transfer information on the basis of the acquired transfer information.

21. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein in said transmitting step, the input image data is transmitted to a proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, and

said proxy device transfers the received image data to an output device represented by the acquired transfer information in accordance with a request from the output device.

22. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein in said transmitting step, the input image data is transmitted to a proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, and

said proxy device transfers the received image data by controlling an output device represented by the acquired transfer information in accordance with the acquired transfer information.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein in said transmitting step, the acquired transfer information is transmitted to the ~~external~~ second device.

24. (Original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the transfer information contains a protocol used to transfer the data, a data format of the data to be transferred, and an address representing a destination to which the data is to be transferred.

25. (Currently Amended) ~~An image input/output control~~ A method for ~~executing image input/output processing~~ transmitting image data, said method comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the plurality of devices including a proxy device which converts image data into a data format, a first device which can transmit image data which the proxy device can convert into the data format, and a second device which can process image data converted into the data format;

acquiring the transfer information;

receiving, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, the image data from ~~a~~ the first ~~external~~ device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network;

converting, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, the received image data into a data format represented by the acquired transfer information; and

transmitting the converted image data from the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information to ~~a transfer destination~~ the second device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 25, further comprising an announcing step of announcing, to the network, information representing a data format receivable in said ~~reception~~ receiving step and information representing a data format transmittable in said transmitting step.

27. (Original) The method according to claim 25, wherein, in said converting step, at least one of conversion of the data format, conversion of an image resolution, and conversion of an image depth is performed.

28. (Original) The method according to claim 25, wherein, in said converting step, at least one of image trimming, image enlargement, image reduction, image deformation, image edge extraction, and image color conversion is performed.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 25, wherein, in said converting step, at least one of conversion of the image data to coded data by encoding processing such as character recognition, conversion of the image data to a structured image format by image region separation processing and encoding processing, and conversion of coded data to the image data by rasterization image processing is performed.

30. (Original) The method according to claim 25, wherein, in said converting step, conversion of a data compression scheme or conversion of a data compression ratio is performed.

31 - 45. (Cancelled)

46. (Currently Amended) A computer executable program embodied in a computer readable storage medium, for making a computer execute ~~image input/output processing~~ data transmission, said program comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

causing a user to select a desired transfer information from the generated transfer information; and

transmitting image data from ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the selected transfer information to ~~an output~~ a second device represented by the selected transfer information on the basis of the selected transfer information.

47. (Currently Amended) A computer executable program embodied in a computer readable storage medium, for making a computer execute ~~image input/output processing~~ data transmission, said program comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the device information indicating that the device actively ~~executes~~ starts data communication with an external device or that the device passively executes data communication with an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data communication;

causing a user to select a desired transfer path;

acquiring transfer information corresponding to the selected transfer path;

inputting image data at ~~an input~~ a first device represented by the acquired transfer information; and

transmitting the input image data from the ~~input~~ first device to ~~an external~~ a second device represented by the acquired transfer information on the basis of the acquired transfer information.

48. (Currently Amended) A computer executable program embodied in a computer readable storage medium, for making a computer execute ~~image input/output processing~~ data transmission, said program comprising the steps of:

generating transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of device information corresponding to each of the plurality of devices, the plurality

of devices including a proxy device which converts image data into a data format, a first device which can transmit image data which the proxy device can convert into the data format, and a second device which can process image data converted into the data format;

acquiring the transfer information;

receiving, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, the image data from ~~a~~ the first ~~external~~ device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network;

converting, at the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information, the received image data into a data format represented by the acquired transfer information; and

transmitting the converted image data from the proxy device represented by the acquired transfer information to ~~a transfer destination~~ the second device represented by the acquired transfer information through a network.

49. (Currently Amended) A computer comprising:

a first acquisition ~~means for acquiring~~ unit that acquires first device information corresponding to a first device, the first device information indicating that the first device actively ~~executes~~ starts data transfer to an external device or that the first device passively executes data transfer to the an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data reception;

a second acquisition ~~means for acquiring~~ unit that acquires second device information corresponding to a second device, the second device information indicating that the second device actively ~~executes~~ starts data reception from an external device or that the second

device passively executes data reception from an external device in accordance with an instruction from the external device which can actively start data transfer; and

a generating ~~means for generating~~ unit that generates transfer information describing a combination of a plurality of devices on the basis of the acquired first device information and the acquired second device information.

50 - 51. (Cancelled)

52. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the first device information indicates data transfer being executed actively or passively by the first device for each protocol with which the data transfer is performed in compliance and the second device information indicates data transfer being executed actively or passively by the second device for each protocol with which the data transfer is performed in compliance, and

wherein the generated transfer information describes the combination of the plurality of devices and a protocol used between the plurality of devices.